College and Research Library Contributions to Adult Education

ARTHUR T. HAMLIN

AN INVESTIGATION of college and university library activity in adult education quickly reveals that nearly every program used to educate adults is used by some college libraries. Berea College had its "bookmobile," horse-drawn of course, on the roads of the Appalachians by 1916. It still uses mule-drawn skids to get book collections back into the hollows where no roads exist.[1] For more than forty years the University of Michigan Library has provided extensive services to all citizens of the state through its special extension staff. Reference service, packets of book and pamphlet material sent by mail, reading lists, and many other services have been supplied to women's clubs, farm groups, parent-teacher organizations, and countless other clubs and associations.[2] Thirty-one other universities provide similar extension services.[3] Some ten years ago Vanderbilt University developed a book mail service for rural ministers in its section of the country.[4] When the American Library Association received a large grant from the Fund for Adult Education in 1953, three of the projects financed by subgrants were operated by college libraries. The University of Utah used A.L.A. funds to conduct a very successful series of television programs on important events in the history of Utah and the nation. Organized community groups met to view and to discuss the thirteen weekly programs. With similar help the North Carolina College Library conducted a series of discussions for adults on problems facing Negroes. Oklahoma A. & M. used its grant "to determine the feasibility of using home demonstration agents to promote a reading demonstration in a rural country without library service."[5] Numerous college libraries have taken an active part in the Great Books program.

In these and countless other ways an occasional academic library

Mr. Hamlin is University Librarian, University of Cincinnati.

makes important contributions to adult education. These, however, are not services typical of college library operations. Some of these services are performed by colleges because of the weakness of local public libraries or the state library program. Others, like the Utah television program, bear witness to the ability and interest of a university librarian who saw a good project to be done and found the means to do it.

Of much greater significance than these somewhat dramatic, isolated examples of forceful adult education programs are the regular services of college libraries in loaning books to adults, in providing ready reference help to the community, and through interlibrary loans. Thus the primary issue to be examined is not the adult education role of the college library, but the role of the college or university itself in adult education. The academic library is essentially a service department to its institution. Only as the institution recognizes the responsibilities to adult education and attempts to meet them can its library develop a significant and continuing service for adults.

Until the end of the nineteenth century most institutions of higher education had as little contact as possible with their communities and felt no educational or other responsibilities to the people outside their gates. The concept of town and gown was an antagonism as firmly established as that between cat and dog. Learning flourished only in ivy-clad seclusion. "Academic shop-keeping" was the withering phrase used to cut down the innovators who would open up the collegiate gates.

This extreme and nearly universal position has been demolished. There are many institutions today which nurture a modified seclusion but the majority have concrete programs for service to the outside world. The case was well stated by C. O. Houle [6] of the University of Chicago:

> It is my thesis today, however, that the most powerful change in the colleges and universities of the future will come, not from their internal adaptation to the world, but from their motion outward to provide community educational services to the adult public. Our institutions of higher learning have, for a number of years, been providing a kind of restitutional education to those mature people who were not fortunate enough to complete college when young. In the last twenty-five years, however, colleges and universities, particularly the latter, have been developing large-scale, new kinds of service designed to meet the distinctive needs of adulthood. These services have begun

to take shape, to reach vast numbers of people, and to redirect the character of American institutions of higher learning. But, since the center of focus has remained the resident student, we have paid relatively little attention to the students outside our doors. It is time that we examined our programs of adult education and made some assessment of their future importance in the development of higher education. . . .

In a recent unpublished and tentative study, the National University Extension Association catalogued the different kinds of programs now being undertaken by the universities which belong to that association. It was found that among the major activities of higher institutions are: extension classes; correspondence instruction; radio programs; package libraries; provision of audio-visual aids; short courses and conferences; lecture and concert service; information service; applied research in specialized fields; in-service training programs; clinical services; school, industrial, and community surveys; direction of music and forensic leagues; publications; community-problems advisory services; traveling art galleries; and services for specialized clientele, such as agricultural workers or members of labor unions.

Each of these major headings includes a wide variety of subclassifications of service. It is clear that community service, in the university at least, is not only large but also highly diversified in its form. And yet each year the numbers of persons reached grow larger, and the new programs grow more numerous. The speakers at college commencements have always assured the new graduates that their true education lay before them in adulthood; this message is now reaching even the university presidents. The state universities and land-grant colleges are leading the way, closely followed by the urban universities. The junior colleges are realizing that one of their best hopes lies in becoming true community colleges. The teachers' colleges are providing an increasing number of in-service programs for their graduates and other kinds of education for the people in their communities. Even the liberal arts colleges are finally beginning to look around, with speculation, at the world about them.

If the liberal arts colleges are "finally beginning to look around, with speculation, at the world about them," they have made tremendous progress since Houle wrote those words in 1948. The extreme pressure for additional sources of revenue in these past inflationary years has forced many reluctant institutions into community service in order to get community support. These colleges have enjoyed the swimming once they found themselves in the water. In general the types of programs are very similar to those of the universities.

The only official figures on the number of adults reached by college programs are those of the Office of Education for 1952.[7] This report states that 843,923 people were enrolled in extension and correspondence courses, and is an increase from 759,909 in 1948 and 371,173 in 1938. To these figures must be added a considerable factor to include adults enrolled as special students or auditors in degree granting programs.

A recent publication of the Office of Education reports the results of a 1957 questionnaire of the Current Population Survey. This report of Participation in Adult Education shows that 996,000 people were engaged in college or university programs and 267,000 in community or junior college programs. Percentagewise, these two programs account for 15.5 per cent of those reached by formal adult education activities as opposed to three-tenths of one per cent credited to libraries.[8]

As an example of university adult education in action, the University of Cincinnati Evening College had 8,000 enrolled students in the fall of 1958 and very few of these were candidates for any degree. In addition the University has a large number of adults enrolled as auditors and specialists in its day-time courses. Many small cities and nearly all large cities have similar programs conducted by local institutions of higher education.

The majority of the institutions for higher education officially recognize a responsibility for adult education, and have definite programs in action. It, therefore, seems only natural that libraries should be deeply involved in these programs. Every professional librarian has had some small training in the subject. The book collection is a major tool to be used for this purpose. In what ways, then, are libraries, as the principal service arm to higher education, contributing in this particular area of institutional responsibility?

The first duty of the academic library is to provide the material needed by its students, whether part-time or full-time, adolescent or adult. Students enrolled in evening courses or lectures which may not carry degree credit have every right to use the institution's library. These student needs are no great burden because the assigned and suggested reading lists are usually short and a great many adults have, and prefer to use, a good public library near their homes. Certainly a majority of evening and extension students fall back on the institution only for those materials which are not available elsewhere.

Although proper care for the library needs of the extension program

would not be expensive, institutional libraries have generally given this responsibility slight attention. Advance planning to get reading lists is the exception rather than the rule. Few institutions provide lists to the public library. As a result college and public libraries alike act only as a demand arises for certain books or other materials in a special subject area. By the time provision is made for this demand the course has frequently moved on to other materials and many students are disillusioned with the college library. Once the teacher encounters trouble in providing the necessary books, he may turn to lectures and a single text as a means of avoiding a repetition of this difficulty. While the responsibility for this state of affairs rests principally on the individual instructor, the college librarian must share the blame.

A much more serious problem has been created in recent years by the practice of establishing university extension centers or branches remote from the campus. Many tax-supported institutions and not a few private ones have instructional programs in other parts of their city and in outlying towns and small cities. Students in these courses need books yet it is generally impractical to establish full-fledged libraries with trained staffs to provide for the book requirements of the smaller extension centers. In some cases universities have made no provision for books needed by students in the off-campus centers. As a result the burden has fallen on the local public libraries, and they have not borne this burden in silence.

For example, Ohio University in Athens has branches in Ironton, Martins Ferry, Lancaster, Zanesville, Portsmouth, and Chillicothe. The enrollment in the fall of 1957 varied from 126 students in Ironton to 563 in Chillicothe. The first branches were established in 1946 without any provision for libraries. This situation was accepted by at least one public library concerned, but others complained. Since the courses are given in high schools, Ohio University is adding the high school librarian to its staff, with compensation. The university's current budget provides $12,000 for books to support these branch programs.[9]

Other institutions have made special financial arrangements with public libraries to meet the needs of their adult students. The Ohio Library Association set up a special committee to study this problem of library resources for "Branch Universities." It recommended either the establishment of a "separate library or branch library, set up by the parent institution, or a library established by agreement between the parent institution and existing library." Its report goes on to say:

As increasing numbers of students tend to live at home and commute greater distances to institutions of higher education, and as these institutions decentralize, public libraries are confronted with immediate and growing problems of demands for books and services that have been furnished traditionally by college and university libraries. Librarians recognize that public library service particularly in small and medium-sized libraries is not a satisfactory substitute for the college and university library. However, the effort to provide even a portion of the college library service is costly in books, personnel, and reduced service to those segments of the population that the public library is designed to serve.[10]

Universities have been very slow in providing books for extension centers away from the parent institution. They have generally set up minimum libraries for their branches which offer full-time programs of study. When correspondence courses are involved the student often must fall back on any local library resources. A few institutions, principally those supported by the state, do offer a loan service by mail.

Clearly, many academic libraries are not offering adequate service to the adults enrolled in university courses. What are they doing for those people who are not enrolled in courses but who have active reading interests which are not completely satisfied by public library service?

Many adults have occasional need for the college or academic collection. These collections are available for use by the majority of the citizens within a fairly reasonable distance, but the use of these college libraries is amazingly low. G. R. Lyle notes that, "College libraries in general extend the use of their facilities to residents of the town. Some libraries, however, do not grant borrowing privileges but require that materials be used in the library. Other institutions charge a fee or deposit for the privilege of borrowing books. . . . In a number of institutions, especially those supported by state funds, no distinction is made between the public and the graduates of the college. So far as book services are concerned, this means that provision is made for the lending of books by mail service. . . ." [11] Several recent unpublished theses testify to the accessibility of the college library. A study of twenty-six selected Texas college libraries in 1952 found that "only one of the twenty-six college libraries refuses service to non-college patrons, but half of the libraries limit the service on the basis of age. . . . Most of the libraries offer reference service to non-college

patrons in the library, by phone, and by mail. . . . Twenty-four of the libraries are willing to lend books to public libraries on interlibrary loan, but the number of such loans made is small." [12] Another study of thirty-nine college libraries which serve Negroes predominantly reported that only one of the thirty-nine did not extend borrowing privileges to persons in the community.[13]

The community service programs of college libraries in the North Central area (roughly from the Alleghenies to the Rockies) were studied in 1951. Involved were eighty-three colleges, all private, coeducation, four-year institutions in cities of less than 100,000 population. In 90 per cent of the libraries, alumni and persons living within the city limits were given borrowing privileges upon presentation of suitable identification. Very few libraries charged any fee.[14]

These and other reports testify that the doors of the college library are open to the adult reader. They likewise testify that few adults use these doors. The North Central study reports that more than half of the libraries had fewer than fifty borrowers outside the college family. G. R. Rawley in the Texas study finds, from incomplete statistics, that "less than one per cent of total circulation at the college libraries is made to non-college patrons." This conclusion is truly surprising since six of the college communities involved had no local public library. But this is the general experience of librarians everywhere with the possible exception of a few great university libraries in the largest cities. A few of these have been heavily burdened by nonuniversity borrowers and have drastically restricted their service to the community.

There are many factors which contribute to this general lack of use of academic libraries by the minority which has academic interests. Probably the most important single factor is the lack of publicity to the "open door" policy. This would appear to be inconsistent with the emphasis of the past fifteen years on the university's responsibility to its community and to the education of adults in general. College administrators generally acknowledge this responsibility in public utterances and in concrete programs for adults. Yet what service is more fundamental than that of opening the doors of the library, "the heart of the university," and telling the community that the doors are open? Significantly, the decision to give free loan and reference service is almost always made by the librarian, not by the president or the governing board. Academic administrations should adopt library service to the community as institutional policy if they are

sincere in their expressions of institutional service to the community.

Public use of the institution's library involves expense. If and when the burden becomes significant the institution may have to charge for the service. In many situations, the burden will not be great; in some other cases the expense will, with wisdom, be accepted as a small return for the community's financial support of the institution; in large cities some institutions may be forced to charge modest fees for individuals who plan to use library facilities with regularity.[15]

If academic institutions are to serve the public there is the problem of relationship to the public library. There are all too few cases of true cooperation and regular consultation between college and public librarians in the same town or city. Generalization on this topic is difficult because of the widely varying size and responsibilities of individual libraries. The director of the Harvard University Library could not be expected, for example, to meet regularly with the librarian of the relatively small Cambridge Public Library or the head of the New York Public Library to be in close personal contact with all the college librarians in that city. Yet in many cases, the public and academic libraries in the same city are roughly similar in size and resources; students use the public library regularly; and local industry as well as individual townspeople use the university's collections.

In the case of Cincinnati, taxes support both a fine public library and a university collection of more than three-quarters of a million volumes. The writer must admit that he does nothing, as Director of the University Library, to notify the public library of reserve lists and other student needs which are quickly felt throughout the branches. Also, since the public library has a fine audio-visual department it is put to steady use in the university teaching program, not by plan, but simply because it is there and the holdings are excellent for teaching purposes.

There is of course another side to this coin. The point is not so much the problems in Cincinnati, but that problems exist, here and elsewhere. Consultation should be fairly frequent and some of it should be at the governing board level. Competition should be minimized in such areas as building up rare local history and imprints, in expensive financial, legal, and insurance services, and in scientific journals which, because of language, are useful only to a very few scholars and industrial research staffs. It is also desirable to agree on fields of interest which, once established, should be rigorously observed even to the point of directing valuable gifts to the sister library.

One of the most valuable community services rendered by the research library is the provision of scarce scholarly material to the industrial research worker, and to the scholar, whatever his vocational affiliation or lack of it. Few public libraries go as far as colleges and universities in buying scholarly foreign language journals or the very expensive monographic landmarks of scholarship. The college libraries perform a very valuable service by making such material available to the small percentage of adults who are engaged in advanced study.

The future of adult education activities by college and research libraries depends to a considerable extent on the educational background of the rising generation. If the homes, schools, and colleges of America turn out students who are accustomed to the wide use of books and who have been deeply stirred by worthy interests, then adult education will flourish. Two generations ago only 4 per cent of the young people attended college, and higher education obviously bore a small responsibility. Now more than one in three have some college level training.

College faculties and college libraries are doing more than ever before in stimulating interests and in building healthy habits of book use in students. Barriers to the use of books have been removed. Small collections are taken to classrooms and put in dormitories. Instruction places more emphasis on research papers and individual-choice reading. In countless ways the student is helped to experience the rewards of original investigation and reading on his own initiative.[16] Much, of course, remains to be done.

The services of the separately-endowed research libraries, special collections of major public libraries, and the Library of Congress are of great importance to a small number of advanced students, free-lance writers, and scholars. To the general public the great collections such as the John Carter Brown Library, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Henry E. Huntington Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the New York Public Library Reference Division serve principally a museum function through their exhibitions. In 1957 some of the greatest treasures of the Morgan Library were exhibited across the country. All these libraries draw steady streams of school children and sight-seers as well as serious students. The Folger Shakespeare Library makes an indirect contribution to adult education by the promotion of publication on the Tudor and Stuart period. Some of this is scholarly, of course, but some is also published in booklets and popular style for the interested layman. Lectures and concerts of

highest quality are regular features of the educational programs of these institutions.

The historical societies found in most major cities likewise do a great deal for adult education. Generally speaking, they combine the program of the museum and the library. They foster study and publication; as few other educational groups do, they create reading interests in the very old and the very young with equal success. While their library services are largely limited to the advanced student, their programs create the demand for books, which are then procured elsewhere.

The distinction between the services of public libraries and college or research libraries will certainly diminish with the expansion of higher education to reach more communities and an ever growing percentage of the population. Except in the large cities, the various libraries will cooperate more and more in meeting the educational needs of all adults, and in stimulating educational interests. Present barriers are largely artificial. The ancient antagonisms between town librarians and gown librarians are evaporating. Frequent contact will minimize competition for local gifts and the tax dollar. With these gradual changes and with increased financial support, the college and university library should contribute far more to this important field.

References

1. Beach, R. F.: Berea College Library. Tool, Torch. *Berea Alumnus.* Mar. 1941.

2. Flanders, Clover M.: Off-Campus Services of the University of Michigan Library. *College and Research Libraries,* 17:160-168, Mar. 1956.

3. Littleton, I. T.: The Off-Campus Library Services of Universities. *College and Research Libraries,* 20:300-306, July 1959.

4. Kuhlman, A. F.: Vanderbilt Shares Books with Rural Ministers. *Library Journal,* 71:151-153, Feb. 1, 1946.

5. Hewitt, C. H.: *Grant Evaluation Study.* (Multilithed) Chicago, American Library Association, 1958, pp. 78-80.

6. Burns, Norman, and Houle, C. O., eds.: *The Community Responsibilities of Institutions of Higher Learning.* (Proceedings of the Institute for Administrative Officers of Higher Institutions, Vol. XX) Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948, pp. 8-9.

7. U.S. Department of Commerce. *Statistical Abstract of the United States.* Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958, p. 132.

8. U.S. Office of Education. *Participation in Adult Education.* (Circular no. 539) Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959, p. 34.

9. Unpublished correspondence with Walter W. Wright, librarian, Ohio University.

10. Report of the O.L.A. Committee on Education Beyond the High School. *Ohio Library Association Bulletin,* 23:22, July 1958.

11. Lyle, G. R.: *The Administration of the College Library.* 2d. ed. rev. New York, H. W. Wilson, 1949.

12. Rawley, G. R.: *The Public Services of Selected Texas College Libraries in 1952.* Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Texas, 1956, p. 21.

13. Witcher, Carolyn M.: *Community Service Programs of Selected Negro College Libraries.* Unpublished Masters Thesis, Atlanta University, 1955.

14. Stickle, Nellie R.: *Community Service Programs of Selected Liberal Arts College Libraries.* Unpublished Masters Thesis, Columbia University, 1951.

15. Hamlin, A. T.: It's Up to College Librarians. *Library Journal,* 75:1458-1461, Sept. 15, 1950.

16. Hamlin, A. T.: The Role of the College Library in Adult Reading. *In:* National Society for the Study of Education. *Adult Reading.* (55th Yearbook, Part II) Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, pp. 136-156.